

Trainee Chef

The trainee chef or apprentice is the most junior member of the team and works in all areas of the kitchen under supervision. Most chefs spend three years as trainee chefs before moving up to the position of commis chef.

School leavers usually start as trainee chefs, but college leavers usually start as commis chefs.

The person

School-leavers need no minimum academic qualifications to become a trainee chef, but most employers like to see matric.

If you want to train at a technical college or University of Technology you will need to satisfy the entry requirements for that institution, which will depend on the individual course and its particular requirements. You should check with the institutions to find out what these are.

A number of colleges offer courses leading to NQs in Food Preparation and Cooking at Levels 2-4. These are national Qualifications that are registered on the National Qualifications framework, and are issued by THETA. If a college offers these, it means that they have been approved and accredited by THETA to do so.

How to find a job

- ❖ **School leavers:** If you want to take up a job straight after leaving School you should look at the training programmes offered in industry, although these are often limited. Consider contacting your local hotels and restaurants directly and asking if they have any positions available for trainee chefs. You will then undergo three years of on-the-job training, and possibly some block-release study at a college, before becoming a commis chef.
- ❖ **College leavers:** If you wish to study at catering college then, on completion of your course, you can apply for the job of commis chef. Colleges have good contacts with employers. These jobs are also advertised in newspapers and handled by hotel and catering employment agencies. You should also contact local hotels and restaurants direct.

All new chefs start as a trainee or commis chef and work their way up the hierarchy. Try the SA Chefs website on www.saca.co.za

